

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AF-06 ARA-06 EA-06 NEA-09 IO-10

OIC-02 COA-01 EB-07 FEA-01 JUSE-00 INT-05 COME-00

DOT-00 NSF-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AGR-05 ACDA-05 AEC-05

CG-00 CEA-01 FMC-01 EPA-01 OES-03 CEQ-01 CIEP-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TTHUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9724

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 2752

E.O. 11652: XGDSI

TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, IT, UR

SUBJECT: ITALIAN-SOVIET LOS CONSULTATIONS

SUMMARY: AN ITALIAN DELEGATION VISITED MOSCOW FEBRUARY 14-15 FOR CONSULTATIONS ON LOS QUESTIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS. ACCORDING TO A MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION, THE BILATERAL TALKS REVEALED A GENERAL IDENTITY OF VIEWS ON MOST KEY LOS ISSUES. THE SOVIETS EXPRESSED A MEASURE OF UNEASE OVER CERTAIN REPORTS THEY HAVE RECEIVED CONCERNING POSSIBLE US TACTICS AT THE FORTHCOMING LOS CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CHIEF OF THE MFA'S POLITICAL OFFICE DEALING WITH LOS MATTERS, JOSEPH NITTI, HAS BRIEFED US ON SOVIET-ITALIAN LOS CONSULTATIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN MOSCOW FEBRUARY 14-15. PROFESSOR MALODTSOV AND DR. NASSINOVSKIY OF THE MFA'S LEGAL DIVISION REPRESENTED THE SOVIET SIDE AT THE TALKS.

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2. ACCORDING TO NITTI, THE DISCUSSIONS IN MOSCOW REVEALED

EITHER A SIMILARITY OF VIEWS OR A CONVERGENCE OF POSITIONS ON VIRTUALLY ALL CRUCIAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE LOS NEGOTIATIONS. BOTH SIDES AGREED IT IS EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT THAT NO AGREEMENTS EMERGE FROM THE LOS TALKS WHICH WOULD INFRINGE ON THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF PASSAGE.

3. ON THE QUESTION OF STRAITS, THE SOVIETS AND ITALIANS FOUND THAT THEIR POSITIONS ARE CONVERGING. BOTH SIDES EXPRESSED OPPOSITION TO A PROPOSAL PUT FORWARD BY ALGERIA AND OMAN WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR UNIMPEDED TRANSIT FOR MERCHANT VESSELS AND INNOCENT PASSAGE FOR MILITARY VESSELS. THEY CONCLUDED THAT THIS PROPOSAL HAS LITTLE CHANCE OF BEING ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE AND THEY EXPECT THAT A PROPOSAL GENERALLY PROVIDING FOR UNIMPEDED TRANSIT WILL EVENTUALLY BE APPROVED.

4. THE SOVIETS EVINCED SOME CONCERN OVER REPORTS THAT SOME WESTERN DELEGATIONS (INCLUDING, BY INFERENCE, THE AMERICANS) WERE DISPOSED TO VOTING ON ISOLATED QUESTIONS DEEMED READY FOR DECISION AT AN EARLY STAGE OF THE RECONVENED TALKS. WHILE INDICATING THAT THEY HAD NOT HEARD THESE REPORTS, ITALIANS AGREED WITH THE SOVIETS THAT THIS TYPE OF TACTIC COULD PROVE NON-PRODUCTIVE IN THE LONG RUN. THERE WAS A CONSENSUS AMONG THE TWO DELEGATIONS THAT IT WOULD BE MORE PRUDENT TO WORK FOR AN EVENTUAL PACKAGE DEAL. THE SOVIETS ALSO WERE PRE-OCCUPIED OVER REPORTS THEY HAVE HEARD THAT MEMBERS OF THE US CONGRESS ARE URGING THAT DELEGATIONS TO THE NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS BE LED BY SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

5. ACTION REQUESTED. NITTI ASKED WHETHER THE EMBASSY COULD SHED ANY LIGHT ON THE TWO POINTS OVER WHICH THE SOVIETS ARE SHOWING A DEGREE OF CONCERN, NAMELY THE QUESTION OF VOTING ON ISOLATED ISSUES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING LEVEL OF NATIONAL PARTICIPATION. DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE ON THESE POINTS WOULD BE APPRECIATED. VOLPE

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